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LB 454

this practice. Anyone who thinks that no Nebraskans are presently carrying guns is living in a dream world. We have only to read the newspaper and listen to the news every night to know the bad guys are carrying. That's the main reason behind LB 454. We also know that any number of good and solid Nebraska citizens occasionally arm themselves, relying on the goodwill of law enforcement, or a misunderstanding of our state's present concealed weapons statute, to keep them on the right side of the law. Doesn't it make more sense for these individuals to take the prescribed safety course, and apply for and receive the proper permit, if they feel the need to carry a handgun for their own defense? Right now, all they have to do is pay five bucks to the local sheriff, or whatever fee, and they get a handgun, a permit to purchase, and they've got it, period, no training whatsoever. These are the people who are carrying handguns right now in the state of Nebraska. Secondly, violent crime will not increase and will most likely decrease. Studies done in states presently having concealed carry laws have shown violent crime to have decreased, and no study in any state has ever shown crime to increase. Believe me, if there were such a study, we would have all been told about it, more than likely over and over. The fact is that an armed citizenry is a great deterrent to criminals, whose whole game is preying on people who are vulnerable. As one prominent Nebraska law enforcement officer has already stated, these people are cowards with guns, and the last thing they want is for their intended victims possibly to be armed against them. LB 454 does not, as it is sometimes alleged, take us back to the days of the Wild West, but it does provide a measure of equality to folks who in their daily lives and legitimate businesses find themselves threatened by those who would use an advantage of strength, numbers, or a weapon to harm them. With LB 454, these innocent citizens at least have the chance of surviving, unharmed, an assault on their person or family. There is no genetic defect or other shortcoming among Nebraskans which would disqualify us from having a self-defense option open to us that is now enjoyed by citizens in 46 other states. We all know that Nebraskans are honest, responsible, hard-working individuals, many, if not most, of whom have grown up around guns and are both comfortable and responsible with them. There is absolutely no reason to expect that our experience with a concealed carry law would be